



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Alaska National Guard Civil Support Team trains with local first responders**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — The Alaska National Guard's 103rd Civil Support Team, in conjunction with the Anchorage Fire Department, conducted a joint hazmat training scenario yesterday in Anchorage near Merrill Field. The team responded to an overturned rail car tanker simulating leakage of hazardous material at AFD's training center rubble pile.

On the anniversary of the 1964 "Good Friday" earthquake, the CST and AFD participated in Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014. VG-AK14 is a regional, tactically focused exercise and will have multiple interagency field-training exercises that are focused on the response and recovery from a major earthquake and tsunami. VG-AK14 is an exercise conducted to ensure the state of Alaska and the nation are prepared and ready to respond to catastrophic events.

With the population much larger 50 years after the earthquake, more supplies are being transported by railroads to the state of Alaska.

"Today, this would be a very realistic scenario for us, with the way we move hazardous material over rail lines within the state [of] Alaska—both coming up from the lower 48 through Canada, and then moving further north," said 1st Lt. Joseph Radke, Alaska National Guard, 103rd Civil Support Team Officer.

With natural events being extremely unpredictable, the National Guard trains with local responders to always be ready to provide support the state will need.

"Learning to work together and learning each other's capabilities is important, so if this ever happened in the real world, we would know what each other has to offer," said Staff Sgt. Jonathon Luis, 103rd CST.

Vigilant Guard is being conducted March 25 through April 2 in the communities of Anchorage, Matanuska Valley, Valdez, Fairbanks, Cordova and Kodiak.

"Having that friendly handshake and knowing that friendly face when we are boots on the ground makes a big difference," said Radke. "Being able to come in on a first name basis with our local responders and them seeing us not so much as a uniform but as a person, and as a neighbor, makes this type of training invaluable."

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Photo cutlines follow

Photo cutlines:

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Staff Sgt. Jonathon Luis, 103rd Civil Support Team, Alaska National Guard, observes his Soldier responding to a scenario where an overturned rail car tanker is leaking simulated hazardous material at the Anchorage Fire Department training center rubble pile, near Merrill Field in Anchorage, Alaska, March 27. On the anniversary of the 1964 "Good Friday" earthquake, the CST and AFD participated in Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014. VG-AK14 is an exercise conducted to ensure the state of Alaska and the nation are prepared and ready to respond to catastrophic events. (Photo by Army Spc. Kimberly Chouinard/ Released)

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Soldiers with the 103rd Civil Support Team, Alaska National Guard respond to a scenario where an overturned rail car tanker is leaking simulated hazardous material at the Anchorage Fire Department training center rubble pile, near Merrill Field in Anchorage, Alaska, March 27. On the anniversary of the 1964 "Good Friday" earthquake, the CST and AFD participated in Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014. VG-AK14 is an exercise conducted to ensure the state of Alaska and the nation are prepared and ready to respond to catastrophic events. (Photo by Army Spc. Kimberly Chouinard/ Released)